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[without reference to a Main Committee (A/51/L.45/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1)]

51/194. Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 47/168 of 22 December 1992, 48/57 of 14 December 1993, 49/139 A and B of 20 December 1994, 50/57 of 12 December 1995 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 of 28 July 1995 and 1996/33 of 25 July 1996,

Reaffirming also the guiding principles contained in section I of the annex to its resolution 46/182,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,[1] in particular of the attention paid by the Secretary-General to effectiveness, accountability and transparency in humanitarian assistance under increasingly complex operational environments and the need for further efforts to identify and support the smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development,

Taking note of the establishment, within the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, of Reliefweb, for the dissemination of reliable and timely information on natural disasters and other emergencies,

Taking note also of the relevant decisions of operational agencies, organizations, programmes and funds of the United Nations system concerning their participation in a coordinated response to humanitarian emergencies,

[1] A/51/172-E/1996/77.

Recognizing the need for coordinated humanitarian assistance and adequate financial resources to ensure a prompt, timely and effective response by the United Nations to natural disasters and other emergencies, both for immediate relief and for the smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development, which are not necessarily sequential and often proceed at the same time,

Bearing in mind the critical importance of prevention, preparedness and contingency planning for a timely and effective response to both natural and other emergencies by the Governments concerned and the international community,

Welcoming the request to the Secretary-General by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1995/56, to submit to the Council, at its substantive session of 1997, in close cooperation with relevant organizations of the United Nations system, a comprehensive analytical report, including options, proposals and recommendations for a review of issues concerning the role and operational responsibilities and strengthening of all aspects of the capacity of the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance,

Deeply concerned about the suffering of victims of disasters and emergency situations, the loss of human lives, the flow of refugees, the mass displacement of people and the material destruction,

Reaffirming that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States must be fully respected in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and, in this context, that humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country and in principle on the basis of an appeal of the affected country,

Reaffirming also that each State has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory, and hence, the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory,

Strongly emphasizing the urgent need to ensure, respect and promote international humanitarian law, principles and norms, the safety of humanitarian personnel and the need for States whose populations are in need of humanitarian assistance to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, in particular the supply of food, medicines, shelter and health care, for which access to victims is essential, and reaffirming that humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality,

Concerned about the impediments created by natural disasters and similar emergencies to the development efforts of the affected countries, and welcoming the efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, to promote disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures,

Commending the activities of the United Nations Volunteers, and of the "White Helmets", deployed in the context of the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 49/139 B of 29 December 1994 and 50/19 of 28 November 1995, as well as other activities to improve, in accordance with resolutions

46/182 and 50/19, the capability for a quick and coordinated response to natural disasters and other emergencies,

Reaffirming the need for the improved accountability of all relevant actors involved in emergency relief operations,

1. Encourages Governments to ensure coherence in the direction given to the governing bodies of relevant organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and to thereby promote the development and strengthening of the cooperation between these organizations and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, drawing on the mandate, expertise and respective strengths and available capabilities of each, to improve the system-wide capability for a quick and coordinated response to complex humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters;

2. Urges all relevant organizations of the United Nations system to participate actively in the follow-up process established by Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56;

3. Calls upon the Secretary-General to ensure that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, as a contribution to the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 1997, develops options and proposals to further define operational responsibilities between its members, drawing on their respective mandates, expertise, strengths and available capabilities, to identify cooperative arrangements to strengthen their joint capacities and to strengthen its work in priority setting and formulation of coherent humanitarian strategies;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to include in his report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 1997 recommendations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on measures aimed at making it a more effective and transparent mechanism, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, for inter-agency decision-making on coordination;

5. Emphasizes the need for the Secretary-General to draw on the discussions and conclusions in the various governing boards, as mentioned in paragraph 1 above, on the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56, on the results of the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in this regard and on the assessment of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, when contributing to the report of the Secretary-General, in order to ensure that all relevant issues are coherently addressed and appropriately reflected;

6. Encourages all relevant agencies of the United Nations system to collaborate closely at the country level in carrying out their relief activities, in order to enhance the overall policy coherence, operational complementarity and cost-effectiveness of the response of the United Nations system in emergencies;

7. Encourages the Secretary-General to develop further, in consultation with the Emergency Relief Coordinator and with members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, a transparent and timely procedure for putting into place effective coordination arrangements in the field;

8. Encourages members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to cooperate closely with each other, as well as with the Bretton Woods institutions and the regional development banks, to ensure that relief,

rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development is addressed in a more effective manner, taking into account the need for a clearer division of responsibilities between different actors;

9. Encourages the Secretary-General to strengthen further the cooperation and coordination between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and other relevant departments of the Secretariat to ensure an effective and coherent United Nations response to natural disasters and other emergencies;

10. Calls upon States to respond quickly and generously to consolidated appeals for humanitarian assistance, taking into account the importance for donors to be flexible in their response to the specific requirements of affected populations, for rapid-response as well as for early rehabilitation and recovery;

11. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, to include in his report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 1997 proposals for the clearer identification of priority needs and the formulation of a coherent humanitarian strategy within consolidated appeals, and to ensure that consolidated appeals are formulated in a manner consistent with the smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development, and also requests the Secretary-General to invite States to submit their views on this subject in due time;

12. Invites the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, to make recommendations to the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session in 1997, on possible ways to strengthen the effectiveness of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, taking into account the revolving nature of the Fund, to ensure a timely response in the initial phase of an emergency, and taking into account the need for transparent complementarity between the Fund and the individual emergency funds of operational agencies, and requests the Secretary-General to invite States to submit their views on this subject in due time;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to further develop Reliefweb as the global humanitarian information system for the dissemination of reliable and timely information on emergencies and natural disasters, and encourages all Governments, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other relevant organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to support Reliefweb and actively participate in the Reliefweb information exchange, through the Department of Humanitarian Affairs;

14. Encourages the Secretary-General to develop further the Humanitarian Early Warning System, to make it fully operational as soon as possible and to consult all States on the use to which the database could be put, as well as its further development, taking into account that early warning information should be made available in an unrestricted and timely manner to all interested Governments and authorities concerned;

15. Calls upon the United Nations system to strengthen accountability in the field of humanitarian assistance, in particular through improved monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that:

(a) Organizations of the United Nations system involved in humanitarian assistance activities develop common methodologies for data

collection and reporting, situation analyses, needs assessment, monitoring and tracking of resources, in order to ensure an effective and timely response;

(b) Clearer arrangements are made for system-wide evaluation, that the lessons learned from evaluation exercises are systematically applied at the operational level and that joint evaluation criteria are developed for humanitarian and disaster relief operations at the planning stage;

16. Urges all operational agencies of the United Nations system to collaborate fully with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, particularly in the early phase of an emergency, inter alia, by providing the Department with sufficient support in terms of human and logistical assets, to enable it to enhance coordination and the rapid-response capability of the system as a whole;

17. Stresses the critical need to create a sound and predictable financial basis for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to enable it to carry out fully its mandate, and encourages the Secretary-General to continue to explore all possible options to achieve that goal.

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by seventeen years of war, and stressing the importance of a return to peace and stability for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan, bearing in mind that the country continues to suffer from an extremely critical economic situation as a landlocked, least developed and war-stricken country,

Supporting the efforts of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan headed by Mr. Norbert Holl to bring about the restoration of peace, normalcy and national reconciliation and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of war-stricken Afghanistan,

Deeply concerned about the problem of millions of anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnance in Afghanistan, which continue to prevent many Afghan refugees from returning to their villages and working in their fields, and disturbed by reports of new mines being laid,

Concerned for the well-being of the unarmed civilian population of Afghanistan, in particular of Kabul, who face a long winter possibly deprived of basic foods, fuel and medicine owing to a renewal of hostilities around the capital,

Bearing in mind the close interrelationship between ensuring peace and normalcy in Afghanistan and the ability of the country to take effective steps towards revitalizing the economy, and stressing that a cessation of armed hostilities between the warring parties in Afghanistan and political stability are indispensable if reconstruction measures are to have a lasting effect,

Affirming the urgent need to continue international action to assist Afghanistan in restoring basic services and the infrastructure of the country, and welcoming the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies, associated bodies and other humanitarian organizations and agencies, including relevant non-governmental organizations, in this respect,

Expressing its appreciation for the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in its continuing support for the repatriation of Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries,

Reaffirming the principle of non-refoulement as contained in article 33 of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees,[2]

Expressing its gratitude to all Governments that have rendered assistance to Afghan refugees, in particular the Governments of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and recognizing the need for continuing international assistance for the maintenance abroad and the voluntary repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons,

Expressing its appreciation to the States, intergovernmental organizations and associated bodies of the United Nations, as well as to other humanitarian organizations and agencies, including relevant non-governmental organizations, that have responded positively and continue to respond to the humanitarian needs of Afghanistan, as well as to the Secretary-General for his efforts to draw the attention of the international community to the acute

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[2] United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, No. 2545.

problems of reconstruction in Afghanistan and for mobilizing and coordinating the delivery of appropriate humanitarian assistance,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General,[1] and endorses the observations and recommendations set out therein;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to authorize the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, established under resolution 48/208, to continue its efforts to facilitate national reconciliation and reconstruction in Afghanistan;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General to continue efforts to develop plans for national reconstruction and rehabilitation beginning in areas of peace and security, on the basis of the recommendations set out in his report;

4. Calls upon the leaders of all Afghan parties to place the highest priority on national reconciliation, acknowledging the war-weariness of the Afghan people and their desire for rehabilitation, reconstruction and economic and social development;

5. Demands that all Afghan parties fulfil their obligations and honour their commitments regarding the safety and full freedom of movement of United Nations personnel and other international personnel, as well as the security of their premises in Afghanistan, and cooperate fully with the United Nations and associated bodies as well as with other humanitarian organizations and agencies in their efforts to respond to the humanitarian needs of the people of Afghanistan;

6. Calls upon all parties not to hamper the delivery of humanitarian assistance;

7. Expresses grave concern at the indiscriminate use of landmines in Afghanistan, which seriously impedes the delivery of humanitarian assistance;

8. Urgently appeals to all States, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, specialized agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to continue to provide, on a priority basis and as far as conditions on the ground permit, all possible financial, technical and material assistance for the restoration of basic services and the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the voluntary, safe and secure return of refugees and internally displaced persons, with dignity and honour, and appeals to the international financial and development institutions to assist in the planning of the reconstruction of Afghanistan;

9. Calls upon the international community to respond to the inter-agency consolidated appeal for emergency humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance for Afghanistan launched by the Secretary-General for the period from 1 January to 31 December 1997, bearing in mind the availability also of the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund;

10. Denounces the discrimination against girls and women and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Afghanistan, and notes with deep concern possible repercussions on international relief and reconstruction programmes in Afghanistan;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session a report on the actions taken pursuant to the present resolution;

12. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session, under the cluster of items on coordination of humanitarian assistance, the item entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan".

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B

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 49/140 of 20 December 1994 and 50/88 B of 19 December 1995,

Recalling also Security Council resolution 1076 (1996) of 22 October 1996, the previous statements of the President of the Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan, including the statements of 15 February and 28 September 1996,[3] and the letter dated 22 August 1996 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General,[4]

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General of 26 November 1996[5] and of his letters dated 20 November 1996 addressed to the President of the General Assembly[6] and the President of the Security Council,[7]

Noting all recent declarations by participants of regional international meetings and by international organizations on the situation in Afghanistan, including the statement by the Organization of the Islamic Conference ministerial meeting of 2 October 1996, the joint declaration made on 4 October 1996 by the leaders of Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian

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[3] Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-first Year, Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council, 1996, documents S/PRST/1996/6 and S/PRST/1996/40, respectively.

[4] Ibid., Supplement for July, August and September 1996, document S/1996/683.

[5] A/51/698-S/1996/988; see Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-first Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1996, document S/1996/988.

[6] A/51/689.

[7] Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-first Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1996, document S/1996/966.

Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan,[8] the statement issued on 28 October 1996 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union[9] and the Tehran Declaration of 30 October 1996,[10]

Welcoming the initiative of the Secretary-General to convene the international meeting on Afghanistan on 18 November 1996 in New York and his intention to convene further meetings of the group from time to time,

Wishing the people of Afghanistan peace and prosperity,

Strongly committed to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan,

Expressing concern at the continuation and recent intensification of the military confrontation in Afghanistan, which have caused civilian casualties and an increase in refugees and displaced persons, and which seriously endanger the stability and peaceful development of the region,

Deeply concerned about the discrimination against women and girls and other recurring abuses of human rights in Afghanistan, and emphasizing the importance of democracy and of the realization of human rights in any future political process in Afghanistan,

Deeply concerned also about the lack of progress in reaching an agreement on the establishment of an acceptable and broadly representative council and an immediate and durable ceasefire and urging all Afghan parties to resolve their differences through peaceful means and achieve national reconciliation through political dialogue,

Affirming the readiness of the United Nations to assist the people of Afghanistan in their effort to resolve internal political differences, facilitating national reconciliation leading to the restoration of a fully representative, broad-based transitional government of national unity and to the start of the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction in their country,

Convinced that the United Nations, as a universally recognized intermediary, must continue to play a central and impartial role in international efforts towards a peaceful resolution of the Afghan conflict,

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[8] A/51/470-S/1996/838, annex; see Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-first Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1996, document S/1996/838.

[9] A/51/635-S/1996/894, annex; see Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-first Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1996, document S/1996/894.

[10] A/51/634-S/1996/890; see Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-first Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1996, document S/1996/890.

Expressing its support for the continuing efforts of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan headed by Mr. Norbert Holl to bring about the restoration of peace, normalcy and national reconciliation, through a political process in which all segments of Afghan society are represented,

Expressing its appreciation for the efforts of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in support of the Special Mission and the engagement of that organization in Afghanistan, in coordination with the United Nations, with a view to achieving a just and lasting political settlement,

Stressing the need to prevent further civilian casualties,

Stressing also the importance of non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan,

Deeply concerned at the continued supply of weapons, military equipment and ammunition to the Afghan parties, which has further contributed to the deaths of innocent civilians and the destruction of cities, villages and homes and has encouraged the factions in their futile efforts to settle political differences by military means,

Expressing its mounting concern about actions undermining the security of State frontiers, including the growing illicit traffic in arms and narcotics by criminal elements and groups from certain areas of Afghanistan and about the use of Afghan territory for the training and harbouring of terrorists, which create a threat to peace and stability in the entire region, including Afghanistan,

Bearing in mind that Afghanistan, as a State party to the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage[11] of 16 November 1972, has recognized its primary duty to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of, inter alia, the cultural heritage situated on its territory,

Bearing in mind also the close interrelationship between ensuring peace and normalcy in Afghanistan and the ability of the country to take effective steps towards revitalizing the economy, and stressing that a cessation of armed hostilities between the warring parties in Afghanistan and political stability are indispensable if reconstruction measures are to have a lasting effect,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General,[5] and endorses the observations and recommendations set out therein;

2. Stresses that the main responsibility for finding a political solution to the conflict lies with the Afghan parties;

3. Calls upon all Afghan parties to cease immediately all armed hostilities, to renounce the use of force, to put aside their differences and to engage in a political dialogue aimed at achieving national reconciliation and a lasting political settlement of the conflict and establishing a fully representative and broad-based transitional government of national unity;

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[11] United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1037, No. 15511.

4. Supports the Secretary-General in his continuing efforts, undertaken in cooperation with the Afghan parties and with interested States and international organizations, in particular the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to promote the political process aimed at achieving national reconciliation in Afghanistan;

5. Reaffirms its full support for the efforts of the United Nations, in particular the activities of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, in facilitating, where appropriate in cooperation with interested States and international organizations, the political process towards the goals of national reconciliation and a lasting political settlement with the participation of all parties to the conflict and all segments of Afghan society;

6. Calls upon all Afghan parties to cooperate with the United Nations Special Mission, and encourages all interested States and international organizations to take all steps necessary, in close coordination with the United Nations Special Mission, to promote peace in Afghanistan, to support the United Nations efforts to this end and to use any influence they have to encourage the parties to cooperate fully with the United Nations Special Mission;

7. Demands that all Afghan parties fulfil their obligations and honour their commitments regarding the safety and full freedom of movement of United Nations personnel, in particular the personnel of the United Nations Special Mission, as well as the security of their premises in Afghanistan;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to authorize the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan, established under resolution 48/208, to continue its efforts to facilitate national reconciliation and reconstruction in Afghanistan, specifically to mediate an end to the conflict and to facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive peaceful settlement, to be agreed upon by the Afghan parties, which could include, inter alia, the following elements:

- An immediate and durable ceasefire among the Afghan parties, to be supervised by a commission composed of representatives of all the warring parties, facilitated by the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference;

- The demilitarization of Kabul, with adequate safeguards to ensure security and public order;

- The establishment of a broad-based and fully representative authoritative council, with authority, inter alia:

  To create and control a national security force to provide for security throughout the country and oversee the demobilization of all the warring parties through the collection and safeguarding of all heavy weapons in the country, and to stop the flow of arms and of equipment related to arms production to the parties;

  To form a fully representative and broad-based transitional government which would, inter alia, control the national security force and create conditions for free and fair

elections leading to a representative national government, possibly utilizing traditional decision-making structures, such as a grand assembly, to help to establish those conditions throughout the country;

9. Expresses its support for the proposal by the Secretary-General to further strengthen the United Nations Special Mission by increasing the number of its military advisers from the current two to five and also by assigning to it two civilian police advisers;

10. Reiterates its call upon all Afghans, especially the leaders of warring parties, to cooperate fully with the broad-based authoritative council, priority being given to the implementation of the steps referred to in paragraph 8 above;

11. Deplores the civilian casualties inflicted by the indiscriminate use of landmines, and calls upon all Afghan parties to desist from such use;

12. Denounces the discrimination against girls and women and other violations of human rights in Afghanistan, and calls upon all Afghan parties to respect the human rights of every individual, regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion;

13. Denounces also violations of international humanitarian law in Afghanistan, and urgently calls upon all parties strictly to respect all its provisions;

14. Calls upon all Afghan parties to take appropriate steps to prohibit, prevent and, if necessary, put a stop to any form of theft, pillage or misappropriation of and any acts of vandalism directed against, cultural property of the Afghan nation;

15. Calls upon all States strictly to refrain from any outside interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, including the involvement of foreign military personnel, to respect the right of the Afghan people to determine their own destiny and to respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan;

16. Also calls upon all States immediately to end the supply of arms, ammunition, military equipment, training or any other military support to all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan;

17. Reiterates that the continuation of the conflict in Afghanistan provides a fertile ground for terrorism and drug-trafficking which destabilize the region and beyond, and calls upon the leaders of the Afghan parties to halt such activities;

18. Supports the intention of the Secretary-General to move the headquarters of the United Nations Special Mission to Kabul when conditions permit;

19. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly every three months during its fifty-first session on the progress of the United Nations Special Mission and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-second session on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution;

20. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session the item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security".

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